



## **Top Two Primary (I-872) Implementing Rules**

### **Candidate Filing:**

- Initiative 872 changes the primary election for partisan congressional, state, and county office.
- Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers.
- A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.
- A candidate states his or her party preference on the Declaration of Candidacy.
  - Each candidate is allowed up to 16 characters for the name of the political party.
  - A candidate may also choose to not state a preference for a political party.
- A candidate is not required to obtain approval from a party in order to state a preference for that party.
- Political parties can no longer fill a vacancy on the major party ticket because there is no "party ticket."
  - There is a void in candidacy only if no candidate files. In this case, a special three-day filing period is opened.
- The filing process is the same for *all* candidates; convention and petition requirements now only apply to minor party and independent candidates for President.

### **Primary Election Ballot:**

- If a candidate states a preference for a political party on the declaration of candidacy, it will be listed on the ballot as:  
**John Smith**  
**(Prefers Example Party)**
- If a candidate does not state a preference, the following will be listed on the ballot:  
**John Smith**  
**(States No Party Preference)**
- A candidate's party preference will be the same on both Primary and General Election ballots.
- Each ballot that includes a partisan race must include the following notice in bold:

**READ: Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.**

- Political parties are free to nominate or endorse candidates through their own mechanism.
  - The law does not allow nominations or endorsements by interest groups, political action committees, political parties, labor unions, editorial boards, or other private organizations to be printed on the ballot.
  - The Primary plays no role in political party nominations, and political party nominations are not displayed on the ballot.

- Candidates may mention nominations and endorsements in a voters' pamphlet statement.
- For the Primary, the order in which the candidates are listed is determined by lot.
- Even if only one or two candidates file, partisan offices will still appear in the Primary. The rules for nonpartisan office have not changed.
- The following notice will be provided at the Primary either on a separate insert with the absentee ballot, or on a sign in the poll site:

**Washington has a new primary. You do not have to pick a party. In each race, you may vote for any candidate listed. The two candidates who receive the most votes in the August primary will advance to the November general election.**

**Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.**

#### **Voters:**

- Voters are not required to affiliate with a political party in order to vote.
- For each race, voters may vote for any candidate.
- The purpose of the Primary is to winnow the number of candidates to two.
- Voters in the Primary are voting for candidates, not choosing a political party's nominees.

#### **General Election Ballot**

- The two candidates who receive the most votes advance to the General Election ballot.
  - Candidates must also receive at least 1% of all votes cast for that office.
- A candidate's party preference is immaterial to whether the candidate qualifies for the General Election.
- In each race on the General Election ballot, the candidate who received the most votes in the Primary is listed first and the candidate who received the second most votes in the Primary is listed second.
- The party preference information printed on the Primary Election ballot is printed the same on the General Election ballot.
- On a General Election ballot that includes the race for President and Vice President, the candidates are listed as:

**John Smith / Jane Doe**

**Example Party Nominees**

- On a General Election ballot that includes the race for President and Vice President, the following notice must be provided after the race for President and Vice President but before the other offices:

**READ: Each candidate for President and Vice President is the official nominee of a political party. For other partisan offices, each candidate may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.**